Critique Top Scottish Gundog 2013

Very privileged I feel to have been invited to judge the famous, well established Scottish Gundog of the Year competition, organised so ably by the experienced committee of the Gundog Breeds of Scotland. The setting at the well appointed Queensferry Hotel overlooked the lovely green riverbanks of the Firth of Forth, which on the morning looked so relaxing bathed in gentle sunlight. The ring was atmospherically decorated and plush for the occasion surrounded with a fantastic crowd of Scottish gundog enthusiasts so very sporting and generous in their applause towards the exhibits. The welcome and the splendid lunch, at which all participated before judging, added to the great social feel to the day and the most kind sponsorship of Arden Grange food suppliers gave a further colourful backdrop to the ring.

The quality of the exhibits was remarkable and I was greatly honoured to have the opportunity to assess each dog on the day. Winner of the Veteran Final was a superb Gordon Setter dog approaching ten years of age Sh. Ch. Shannas Wave Dancer of Tarcoulter ShCM owned by Mrs K S Knight, a prodigious winner I later learned and still in first class coat and muscled condition with nothing exaggerated, a wonderful type. Veteran runner up was Caffrey & Dods Welsh Springer Spaniel Sh.Ch. Gellyburn Damselfly ShCM JW of excellent breed type and outline, well feathered and muscled and at seven and a half years of age, still able to take on the best in the breed.

The final of the top Scottish Gundog Puppy was taken by a most impressive and solid golden retriever bitch Linirgor Luv Song JW owned by I & L Dunbar a lovely, well balanced head and kind expression, super body and topline, exceptionally strong hindquarters and all so beautifully angulated and presented. Runner up was the black flat coated retriever Rotherfield First Request JW owned by Mrs W Blain, another excellent breed head and overall type, well constructed, sound moving , well muscled and a extrovert shower. All the puppy finalist will have great futures ahead of them I am sure as the quality present was very high indeed.

The main competition for Top Scottish Gundog 2013 generated a strong tussle between the exhibits with some truly lovely dogs not reaching the final due to the match clashes on the way. The overall winner proved to be an Italian Spinone dog Sh.Ch. Cobbets Rock N Roll Party With Bessalone owned by Mrs & Miss Knowles & Glen, seven years of age, wonderfully mature and full of substance, type and power, lovely breed expression, deep well sprung ribcage, correct head planes and topline, firm across the loins and very well muscled hindquarters with deep second thigh. Made the most of the ring with his sweeping movement, his coat quality and excellent texture assisting him to stand apart on the day. Reserve Top Scottish Gundog 2013 went to another top quality flat coated retriever, the dog Greenbayhill Black Tuxedo owned by Mr R Douglas. Very well balanced overall and a vigorous showman of excellent breed type and presented in great condition with outstanding hindquarter muscling. Excellent flat coat frame and with a true lay to the coat, a very successful dog I understand to date and I am sure his best times are ahead of him as he comes to maturity. As has always been true Scotland demonstrated yet again it is the home to some of the finest gundog specimens, fit and able for the work they were intended.

Thank you all for a warm and homely Scottish welcome, for the hard work the committee put in to organising the day and to all the exhibitors for the effort they applied to showing on the day. Most of all my thanks to the dogs themselves for making a long journey from Wales so memorable and worthwhile. Diolch yn fawr.

Richard Morris (Lascoed)

Judge